

2 October 1963

REFS 6.1.7

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director/Intelligence

SUBJECT : Disposition of Draft Study, "The Soviet
Missile Base Venture in Cuba"

1. Attached is a revised draft of the DDI/RS study of the Soviet missile base venture in Cuba in 1962. I have inserted at several points the reasons for believing what we believe about the state of Soviet knowledge of the U.S. reconnaissance of Cuba at various times during 1962 (see especially pages 26, 27, 30, 48, 52, 57, 59, 61, 77, 78, 83, 84, 85); I have added some things about the Soviet management of the venture, notably the 6 September conversation between Dobrynin and Mr. Sorenson, and have altered the conclusions appropriately; and I have made a number of minor changes which seemed desirable on another reading. You might want to glance through it again before sending it on, as perhaps 50 of the 200-odd pages have been replaced; I suggest that you read at least the summary again.

2. If you see a need for any further technical information on the state of Soviet knowledge of the reconnaissance, an Appendix could be added, taking (and crediting) one section of the ORR paper on the missile base venture, a paper which gives much more detailed treatment than does this to the hard facts of the build-up.

3. The Dobrynin-Sorenson conversation (about the Khrushchev message) is a capital addition. Without this conversation, it is hard not to conclude, as the previous draft did conclude, that the Russians in September were not attempting to deceive us but were inviting us to discover the build-up and acquiesce under the formula of defensive purpose. In the light of that conversation, however, it is

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clear that, as you surmised in a staff meeting at which this was briefly discussed, the Russians were trying to have it both ways--trying to deceive us if possible, while giving us a formula which they could fall back on if deception failed. (I was wrong in thinking that the full account of that conversation would not significantly change the conclusions of the paper; I had heard that the 6 September conversation was an early talk between Dobrynin and Mr. Bowles in which nothing important was said, whereas in fact it was between Dobrynin and Sorenson and was, I think, the most important conversation in the entire course of the venture.)

5. The conclusions are sensitive mainly from the point of view of the Administration, in that, although the Administration appears to advantage in this account from September on, the paper's assessment of the reasons why Khrushchev thought until then that he could get away with it, and thought even afterwards that he could get some profit out of it, is critical at least by implication of several of the Administration's earlier actions and statements. A few of the conclusions are perhaps sensitive from the point of view of CIA: e.g., although (as is now clear) the Russians were indeed attempting to deceive us even in September, some of their statements about defensive purpose did in effect admit what they were up to, and we should have remarked this at the time.

6. As noted above, the immediate question for decision is whether to coordinate this draft any further, and whether to look toward any dissemination of it beyond the Director himself. It might occur to him or you, as a first step, to direct the preparation of a single CIA paper, combining the DDI/RS paper and the ORR paper in an appropriate way and circulating that for either formal or informal coordination. I would recommend against that for two reasons: (a) I have worked closely with the writers of the ORR paper for several months and I have already taken from their draft as much of the detail as I believe would interest an audience concerned mainly with strategic and political questions rather than mainly with weapons systems (the ORR paper could be sent as a second self-contained paper to those of the audience for the DDI/RS paper who might want as much technical detail as the ORR paper provides); and (b) the ORR paper uses less sensitive material than this one and can be circulated widely; if it were combined with this one, which can be circulated to only a few people, there would then be no CIA paper for general circulation.

7. I would also recommend against formal coordination of this paper, if the paper is to go to any audience in the Administration. I say this because of the sensitivity of much of the paper. This seems to be the ideal occasion

to derive some advantage from the DDI/RS format, that of the working paper, which does not have the Agency's imprimatur, which can be presented as a small group effort which "may be of interest" but which does not commit the Agency to its conclusions, and which, in the worst case, can be disowned.

8. The paper could probably be improved by further informal coordination. Various qualified people have read the summary and various portions of the draft, and those perhaps best qualified, the writers of the ORR paper, have read the greater part of it; I have incorporated their corrections and suggestions, and I am confident that I have the story essentially right. Nevertheless, I don't doubt that some of our colleagues, if they were to read this draft carefully straight through, could still improve the presentation of some of the points. Those who might do so, I think, are [redacted] Stoertz, and [redacted] of ONE, Cochran, [redacted] and Lehman of OCI, [redacted] of ORR, [redacted] of the Joint Analysis Group, and Tidwell of the Guidance Staff. If the Director decides to send this paper anywhere, or if he wants the best possible version for his own files, it might be advisable to take an extra week or so and circulate the full paper informally to a few such people as those named. If any dissemination outside CIA is envisaged, I would like to give a copy of this draft to Frank Sieverts of State (he has the necessary clearances, and was authorized by Mr. Bundy to use all the EYES ONLY material bearing on the missile base venture), or to invite him over here to read the draft; he is revising for Mr. Bundy his paper on the American management of the crisis, and our paper can help him.

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9. If the Director does choose to send this paper anywhere, and decides also to get a little further informal coordination of it, while I am coordinating it I can make a few further textural (not structural) repairs, replacing pages with typographical errors, changing phrases that still seem imprecise or awkward, etc. While waiting for him to decide what he wants to do, I can review this paper to see whether it would stand up (for wider, if not general, circulation) without the EYES ONLY material. As suggested above, my preliminary view is No, that much that is essential to the story is in the EYES ONLY material, that neither Soviet nor American conduct is intelligible except on the basis of the EYES ONLY material. But I may be able to find some way around that.

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